UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1865
4 April 1995

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General says successful transfer of command from Multinational Force to UNMIH highlighted level of cooperation between United Nations and United States.

+ Secretary-General says preventive United Nations action is needed in Burundi; Special Representative to convene meeting of political leaders in Bujumbura tomorrow, amid unconfirmed reports of ethnic massacres in north.

+ United Nations and OSCE to hold meeting in Geneva on human rights situation in Chechnya.

+ Special Envoy for Tajikistan to visit Moscow, Dushanbe, Tashkent and northern Afghanistan to prepare for fourth round of inter-Tajik talks.

+ United Nations asks Guatemalan parties to present proposals on socio-economic rights and agrarian situation for evaluation.

+ Ad Hoc Committee on Establishment of International Criminal Court begins first session.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee approves commitment authorizations for International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia and UNAMIR.

+ Commission on Status of Women recommends extension of current session until Friday to finalize draft action platform for Beijing Conference.

+ United Nations holds annual orientation course for new members of permanent missions.

* * *

The successful transfer of command from the Multinational Force to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) highlighted the level of cooperation

For information media—not an official record

between the Organization and the United States, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He made that comment to correspondents today, after briefing the Security Council on his four-day visit to Central America and the Caribbean.

The Secretary-General said he had had lengthy talks with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Port-au-Prince. He had stressed the importance of the upcoming Haitian elections, without which it would difficult to obtain vital foreign investment. He had also dwelt on the need to reinforce the Haitian police, and on the importance of follow-up to the United Nations Mission, especially in the area of economic assistance.

The Council supported, in principle, the maintenance of a small political office in El Salvador after 30 April, the Secretary-General continued. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) will expire on that date. In a recent report, he said a small team of professionals, with support staff, could verify compliance with pending aspects of the El Salvador peace accords and provide good offices.

He went on to say that his visit reflected the Organization's commitment to Latin America and the Caribbean. Peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslavia and Africa were not being maintained at the expense of activities elsewhere, he added.

* * *

The Secretary-General said today that preventive United Nations action was needed in Burundi. He stressed that the Organization was working very seriously to deal with the situation there, citing the dispatch of human rights observers.

In a related development, a United Nations spokesman announced that Special Representative Ahmedou Ould Abdallah would convene a meeting of political and other leaders in Bujumbura tomorrow to discuss the situation. There have been unconfirmed reports of ethnic massacres in the north of the country, but the Special Representative has described the situation in the capital as calm. He has received notes from the Prime Minister and the Chief of Staff of the Army on the reported killings.

Meanwhile, Rwanda had been largely unaffected by the recent events in Burundi, according to Special Representative Shahryar Khan. He expressed the hope that the anniversary of last year's ethnic massacres would be marked peacefully on Friday. He noted that overcrowding in prisons and the growing number of arrests by the authorities remained sources of tension. However, the Trust Fund for Rwanda had earmarked $600,000 for assistance to the judicial system, while the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was helping to improve facilities in detention centres.

* * *

(more)

The United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are to convene a joint meeting on the human rights situation in Chechnya, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. The meeting, to be held in Geneva on Friday, will be chaired by Hungary's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Among the participants in the meeting will be the Council of Europe; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

* * *

The Secretary-General has asked his Special Envoy for Tajikistan, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, to visit Moscow, Dushanbe, Tashkent and northern Afghanistan to fix the time, venue and agenda for the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks. The Special Envoy was expected to arrive in Moscow today, according to a United Nations spokesman.

As agreed during previous consultations, the substantive issues of national reconciliation through the establishment of a broad-based government and the renunciation of the use of force will constitute the core of the agenda of the upcoming talks.

* * *

The United Nations has asked the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to present it with proposals on socio-economic rights and on the agrarian situation in the country. That request follows the signing by the parties of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous People in Mexico City on Friday. The Organization will evaluate the proposals to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, with a view to moving forward with negotiations.

Before leaving Guatemala yesterday, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said the United Nations was determined to pursue and strengthen its efforts to promote national reconciliation in the country. He warned that the difficulties should not be underestimated, but stressed that peace and reconciliation could be achieved with political will and the support of the international community.

* * *

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court yesterday began its first session and elected Adriaan Bos (Netherlands) as its Chairman. Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi (Argentina), Marek Madej (Poland) and Sheriff Dassiouni (Egypt) were elected Vice-Chairmen, while Kuniko Saeki (Japan) was elected Rapporteur.

The Committee was established by the General Assembly last year to review issues arising from the draft statute for an international criminal court

(more)

prepared by the International Law Commission. In the light of that review, it will consider arrangements for convening an international conference to adopt the statute for such a court.

United Nations Legal Counsel Hans Corell said the establishment of an international criminal court had been under consideration for almost half a century. During that time the world had witnessed countless atrocities. Recently, the Security Council had had to resort to ad hoc tribunals to ensure the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of crimes such as those committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. Against that background, the Committee could make a major contribution to the enforcement of the most fundamental rules of international law.

* * *

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has recommended that the Secretary-General be authorized to commit some $1 million to allow the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to continue its activities from 1 to 14 April. The authorization would be made without prejudice to any decisions that the General Assembly might take with regard to the mode of financing of the International Tribunal.

The Committee approved a draft decision to that effect after postponing for one week formal discussion of a draft resolution which would reaffirm that the expenses of the International Tribunal should be met through assessed contributions. By the draft resolution, the Assembly would maintain the same arrangement for financing the Tribunal for the 1996-1997 biennium. It would consider the mode of financing the Tribunal for the subsequent periods at its fifty-second session.

The Committee also approved a draft decision which would authorize the Secretary-General to commit up to $80 million gross for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) for the period 10ÑDecember 1994 to 9 June 1995. For the period 10 June to 9 July 1995, the General Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General to commit almost $20 million should the Security Council extend the Mission's mandate.

* * *

The Commission on the Status of Women has recommended that its current session be extended until Friday to finalize negotiations on the draft platform for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The session was scheduled to have concluded today. The Commission's recommendation must be approved by the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, but no formal meeting of the Council is required for that purpose. The Commission is serving as the preparatory body for the Conference, which will be held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September.

The Commission's working group, which has been negotiating the draft platform since 20 March, will conduct its deliberations through three informal working groups. Informal working group I will discuss the section on natural

resources and the environment; informal working group II will negotiate the section on national mechanisms to promote the advancement of women as well as the proposed section on girls; and informal working group III will deal with the section on health status and health-care services. Informal working group III will also discuss a draft declaration to be submitted to the Beijing Conference.

Meanwhile, the Commission has called for special attention to be paid to the situation of rural women, particularly those displaced by terrorism drug trafficking and other violence. In a resolution adopted yesterday without a vote, it called on governments to integrate displaced rural women in the formulation and implementation of policies for rural development.

* * *

The annual orientation course for new members of permanent missions on the work of the United Nations, organized jointly by the Office of Human Resources Management and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, began today at Headquarters.

The programme, which will conclude on 13 April, is intended for diplomats who recently joined their permanent missions. High-ranking diplomats and senior United Nations officials will address the group. Among the subjects to be covered are the role and functions of the United Nations and its principal organs, the functions of a permanent mission and the role of a diplomat in a multilateral setting.

* *** *